



603 St. Agnes Lane  
Baltimore, Maryland 21229  
Telephone: 410-747-4070  
Fax: 410-747-0138



A Middle States  
Accredited  
Elementary School

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

October 7, 1996

**The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street NW Room 814  
Washington, DC 200554**

**CC: Docket No. 96-45**

**Dear Chairman Hundt:**

**As an elementary school principal with 499 students as my primary responsibility, I am writing in strong support of affordable and meaningful discounts for all schools and libraries. One of the major goals of any educator is to make each student in your care a life-long learner which having access to the world of information technology will assure.**

**There is no doubt that advanced telecommunications services are important to improving learning, sparking the imagination and leveling the playing field for all of this nation's people. Affordable access to technology in all classrooms and libraries will assure that our children and life-long learners can connect with the technology needed to compete in today's and tomorrow's workforce. Advanced telecommunications services in the classroom will also create informed and skilled consumers of new technology well into the 21st century.**

**As the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal-State Joint Board implement the universal service provision I urge you to ensure that telecommunications companies provide services to schools and libraries at significantly discounted rates. All schools and libraries need long-term discounts that are truly affordable, flexible and offer choice in determining which services best meet each communities needs. It is imperative that these services are linked directly into the classroom, lab and work station.**

10:96-45

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

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**I ask you to act upon this historic opportunity to  
bring the world of information to every school child  
and lifelong learner in America.**

**Sincerely,**

*Sister Anne Mary*

**Anne Mary Smith, IHM  
Principal**

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00.96-45  
October 8, 1996

Newfane Grange 1159  
Residents of Newfane, N.Y. 1410

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman

Federal Communications Commission

1919 M Street NW Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554  
C.C. Docket No. 96-45

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman-Hundt:

We are in strong support of affordable and meaningful discounts for all schools and libraries so that every school child can have access to the world of information technology. The passage of the Telecommunications Act earlier this year mandates the development of a rate for education or an "e-rate" to secure affordable rates reflecting the financial capability of this community.

All schools and libraries need long-term discounts that are truly affordable, flexible, and offer choice in determining services.

Please convey these recommendations to

the FCC and the Federal-State Joint Board.

Thank you for your attention in this matter of importance to all schools, libraries, parents and Grandparents of our future generation.

Sincerely yours.

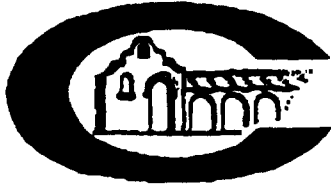
Jessie K. Hoy

Master of Newfane Grange  
6623 Charlottesville Rd. Newfane N.Y.

The following signify support petition for discounts

Name	Address
Mrs Harold Hoy	3006 Ewings Rd. Newfane N.Y.
Harold Hoy	3006 Ewings Rd. Newfane N.Y.
Harold Fisk	3280 Ewings Rd. Newfane N.Y.
Elvora Fisk	3280 Ewings Rd. Newfane N.Y.
James A. Edgerton	3301 Ewings Rd. Newfane N.Y.
David W. Edgerton	3301 Ewings Rd. Newfane N.Y.
Sam M. Fraser	3302 Ewings Rd. Newfane N.Y.
Howard A. Fraser	3302 Ewings Rd. Newfane N.Y.

Roy J. Taylor } 6262 Bayview St., Newfane, N.Y. 14108  
 Doris H. Taylor }  
 Naomi S. Leibing 6433 Lake Road Newfane N.Y. 14108  
 Edna M. Hausman 2999 Hess Rd., Appleton N.Y. 14008  
 Harold C. Hausman 2999 Hess Rd., Appleton N.Y. 14008  
 Mrs. Wendler 2804 Hess Rd. Appleton N.Y. 14008  
 Susan Wendler 2804 Hess Rd. Appleton, N.Y. 14008  
 Gertrude Wendler 2852 Hess Rd. Appleton N.Y. 14008  
 Harold Wendler 2852 Hess Rd. Appleton N.Y. 14008  
 Shirley Foy 2000 Charlottesville N.Y. 14108  
 Bob Foy " " " "  
 Beatrice Koeppen 6647 C Charlottesville, Newfane, N.Y.  
 Alida Hvol 3597 Ridge Rd. Lockport, N.Y. 14094



# CREIGHTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

*learning today for a new tomorrow*

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## GOVERNING BOARD

Mary K. Malm  
President

Jeffrey Gainey  
Clerk

Mary High  
Audrey McKnight  
Joe Nolan, Jr.

SUPERINTENDENT  
Dr. Donald D. Covey

CC Docket No. 96-45

The Honorable Reed Hunt  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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NOV 12 1996

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Dear Mr. Hunt:

I am the school board President in the Creighton Elementary School District in Phoenix, Arizona, and I am writing to urge the Federal-State Joint Board and the FCC to adopt rules that aggressively implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for school districts and libraries. I support the comments filed by the National School Boards Association as regards this issue. Please include this letter in the formal record.

I would like to urge the FCC to include in their plans comprehensive discounts for a range of telecommunications services that will give the Creighton District more affordable access to Internet services, as well as for voice, data and video capabilities necessary for distance learning possibilities. Through our experiences with technology use in our district, we have learned that these services must be provided directly to the classroom, where it can be integrated into the classroom curriculum where it can most effectively impact instructional delivery. I encourage the Commission to not only consider the initial capital expenses of such services, but the ongoing costs of support and training as well.

The Creighton School District is located in east central Phoenix, Arizona, and has seven urban schools serving 8000 students in grades K-8. Our disadvantaged students represent a segment of our nation's population that frequently have little hope of achieving the "American Dream" but who have the potential to succeed in our universities and workplaces given appropriate and meaningful educational opportunities. Recognizing that we needed to update, expand and strengthen the use of technology for instructional purposes, a five-year strategic plan was developed in 1991. Phase One provided increased access to state-of-the-art technology by upgrading computer labs, providing technology for research in our libraries and teacher workstations in the classrooms.

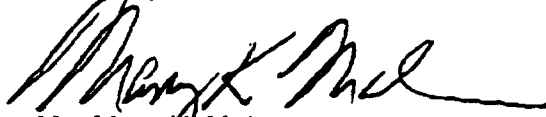
In the four years since the 1991 technology plan was adopted, we have increased access to technology in our classrooms on minimal basis with the current ratio being 1 computer for every fourteen students. In addition, we have

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provided teacher technology training in the form of teacher workshops which focused on the use of software, hardware and Internet use. These efforts while successful within their scope, have resulted in limited access to technology in the classroom, and limited integration of technology in the curriculum. We recognize the need for greater access and more intensive staff development efforts if we are to achieve the broader use of telecommunications technology to achieve our vision of a classroom without walls.

Our district has experienced the difficulties of low student to computer ratios, outdated hardware and software, and lack of funding to obtain emerging technologies. The "affordability" barrier with technology is a challenging one, but we feel that access for students is critical to ensuring that our children are able to succeed in a high-tech marketplace. I encourage the Commission to adopt rules that will help bring the widest range of educational technologies to our schoolchildren.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary K. Malm", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Ms. Mary K. Malm  
School Board President  
Creighton Elementary School District No. 14

MKM/rsg  
5/6/96

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## BOARD OF EDUCATION

RIDGEWOOD, NEW JERSEY 07451

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### Education Center

49 Cottage Place  
Ridgewood, NJ 07451  
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Fax: 201-870-2668

### ADMINISTRATION

Frederick J. Stokley,  
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Joyce A. Snider,  
Acting Deputy Superintendent  
Thomas R. Burgin,  
Business Administrator/  
Board Secretary

May 7, 1996

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

RE: CC Docket #96-45

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am President of the Ridgewood, New Jersey, Board of Education and I am writing to urge the Federal-State Joint Board and the Federal Communications Commission to adopt rules which will fully implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for schools and libraries. I also support the comments of the National School Boards Association and others. Please include this letter in the formal record of the proceedings on CC Docket #96.

I urge the FCC to include a range of telecommunications services at discounts that will give Ridgewood more affordable access to the Internet as well as to interactive, voice, data and video capability necessary for distance learning. I also urge that these services be provided directly to the classroom and that the Commission address funding for both capital expenses and operating costs.

In Ridgewood, a suburban district, all nine schools have dial-up access to on-line services. This is costly in that we pay for a telephone line for each classroom. Also, the district has a T1 line to Rutgers for our Internet connection, at a cost of about \$9,000 annually.

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Some technologies the district would like to implement are the following:

- Distance learning with universities. The district is currently discussing the expansion of an existing relationship with a university to include this capability.
- Network-based simulations with students from other school districts, virtual reality demonstrations, and explorations on the Internet.
- Connecting the school libraries to the county public library system for real-time searches and reservation of materials.
- Home access to school resources such as CD-ROM towers and Internet access.
- Highly secure home access to student records for parents.
- Full motion video-conferencing both locally, within the community, and across the Internet.
- Simulation/model development of complex physical, biological and economic systems.

The "affordability" barriers to technology usage in Ridgewood include:

- The most significant start-up cost that is a problem for the district is wiring the classrooms and offices of the district to local area networks and a wide area network.
- Time for training, an essential component, is very difficult to obtain within the constraints of the current school day and year. There is a hidden cost to always being at the middle or end of the technology cycle. Hardware that is affordable to schools is never cutting edge or even leading edge, so we always are purchasing at the middle or later portion of a life cycle.
- The cost of purchasing and maintaining current versions of software, as they are revised and upgraded, is a significant burden.

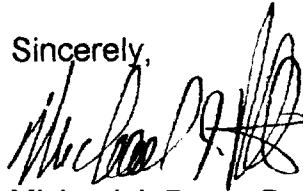
Some benefits of technology that we have seen in Ridgewood are:

- Use of the Internet has been enormously well received by both faculty members and students at Ridgewood High School.
- Use of technology like LegoDacta has been exciting for elementary and middle school students who have been actively engaged in hands-on problem solving.
- Student production of daily television programs at Benjamin Franklin Middle School has exposed students to career opportunities and informed the school and community about current events.
- Students in the Fine Arts and Graphics Arts programs have used the professional tools which they will encounter in the workplace of today, and have become adept in using those tools.

- Our high school newspaper is now composed for publication in much the same way that commercial publications are composed. Students, again, are gaining valuable skills for the workplace.
- The use of simulations has engaged students in complex problem-solving using "games" such as Sim-Town, Sim-Earth, and Sim-City.

In Ridgewood, we firmly believe that technology in the classroom is essential to ensuring that our children can succeed in a high-tech world marketplace. I urge the Commission to adopt rules that will help bring the broadest range of educational technology to our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Porro", with a stylized, overlapping flourish at the end.

Michael J. Porro, President  
Ridgewood Board of Education

MJP:ctd

cc: Board Members

CC: 96-45

**RIDGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Office of the Superintendent**  
**49 Cottage Place**  
**Ridgewood, New Jersey 07451**

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201-670-2700

fax 201-670-2668

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**NOV 12 1996**

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary May 7, 1996

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: CC Docket #96-45

Dear Chairrnan Hundt:

I am Superintendent of Schools in Ridgewood, New Jersey, and I am writing to urge the Federal-State Joint Board and the Federal Communications Commission to adopt rules which will fully implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for schools and libraries. I also support the comments of the National School Boards Association and others. Please include this letter in the formal record of the proceedings on CC Docket #96.

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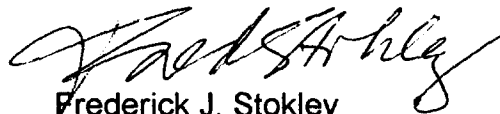
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In Ridgewood, we firmly believe that technology in the classroom is essential to ensuring that our children can succeed in a high-tech world marketplace. I urge the Commission to adopt rules that will help bring the broadest range of educational technology to our students.

Sincerely,



Frederick J. Stokley  
Superintendent of Schools

FJS:ctd

cc: Board Members



GEORGE H. RYAN  
SECRETARY OF STATE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62756

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

May 1, 1996

The Honorable Reed E. Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W. -- Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: FCC Docket # 96-45  
In the Matter of Federal-State Joint Board Universal Service

Dear Mr. Hundt:

The Universal Service provisions being addressed by the Federal-State Joint Board are of vital interest to the Illinois library community. How the needs of schools and libraries are addressed will determine the parameters of information access during many years to come.

Under the office of George H. Ryan, Secretary of State and State Librarian, the Illinois State Library coordinates a network of over 3,000 libraries (academic, public, school and special) that work together in sharing resources in meeting the information needs of people throughout our diverse state. This Illinois Library & Information Network (ILLINET) is a nationally recognized model of cooperation and ensures that the state's citizens receive the best possible library and information service through resource sharing. However, telecommunications charges incurred from electronic networking are a major barrier to information access for library patrons particularly in rural areas. Over 125 public libraries in the state have annual budgets of less than \$25,000. Telecommunications costs of hundreds of dollars per month to access electronic information are much too expensive for these libraries and others. Despite making computers and technology training available to libraries through various Illinois State Library grant programs, computer usage is limited because of the access charges.

I urge the Federal-State Joint Board to implement the recommendations submitted to the Federal Communications Commission by the American Library Association in early April. This national association representing over 58,000 librarians, vendors, and library governing boards, focused on the following key points:

- All telecommunications services should be made available to libraries at a discount
- Library discounts should be made available at the lower of either (1) the lowest price offered to any customer, or (2) the total Service Long Run Incremental Cost
- Libraries in rural and high cost areas should receive further discounts

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The Illinois State Library has also been working with other state education agencies in addressing telecommunications issues. The joint comments submitted in early May by the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois State Library, Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education to the Federal-State Joint Board are also important guidelines as the services available at special rates to libraries and schools are determined.

I urge the Federal-State Joint Board to implement rulemaking that enables libraries and schools to be full partners in electronic networking in the information age.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bridget L. Lamont", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bridget L. Lamont  
Director  
Illinois State Library



GREAT FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1100 4th Street South  
P.O. Box 2428  
Great Falls, Montana 59403  
(406) 791-2300

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

May 7, 1996

The Honorable Reed Hundt  
Chairman, Federal Communication Commission  
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814  
Washington, DC 20554

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am the Information Services Supervisor for the Great Falls Public Schools, Great Falls, Montana, and as such supervise the school libraries and instructional technology installation. I would like to urge the Federal-States Joint Board in the FCC to adopt rules fully and aggressively implement the universal service provisions of the Federal Communications Act of 1996 for schools and libraries. I also support the comments filed by the National School Boards Association, et. al. Please include this letter in the formal record. I specifically urge the FCC to include for deep discounts, a range of telecommunication services that will give my district more affordable access to the Internet as well as to interactive, voice, data, and video capabilities necessary for distance learning. It is also important that these services be provided directly to classrooms where learning actually takes place.

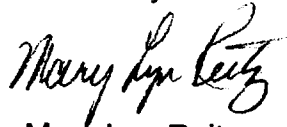
Finally I urge the commission to address the affordability needs of both the capitol expenses of the services and the on going costs. Our district is located in a city with a population of 55,000 on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountain front. By July 1 we will have completed a district wide wiring project that provides a LAN for all classrooms, offices and public areas. Our WAN is currently provided by US West Frame Relay. We have piloted Internet access in five different schools this spring and want to provide Internet access to each of the classrooms in our district of approximately 13,000 students. We have had a three year succession of mill levy failures but were able to pass a very conservative levy this spring. Given our citizen's increasing concern with rising taxes, it is critical that we have some way to supplement the cost of new technologies. While our students are our future, the ability of the public school system to provide students with access and training in information technology is severely hampered by the dollar cost for that technology. This spring as the five schools piloted access to Internet in each of their locations, it was incredible to see the impact on both students and instructors as they began to utilize the access to wide ranges of information and communication. Technology in the classroom is critical in insuring that our children can succeed in a high tech world market place. I urge the

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commission to adopt rules that will help bring the broadest range of technology to our school children.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mary Lyn Reitz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "M".

Mary Lyn Reitz  
Supervisor Information Services

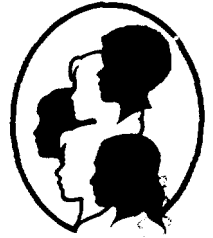
MLR:je

CC: 96-45

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## GRANITE SCHOOL DISTRICT

340 EAST 3545 SOUTH • SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84115 • PHONE: (801) 263-6100



May 3, 1996

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NOV 12 1996

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Chairman Hundt:

As a member of the Granite School District Board of Education, I would like to urge the Federal-State Joint Board and the Federal Communications Commission to adopt rules that fully and aggressively implement the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for schools and libraries. I also support the comments filed by the National School Boards Association, et. al. Please include my letter in the formal record.

Specifically, I urge the FCC to include for deep discounts a range of telecommunications services that will give Granite District more affordable access to the Internet as well as to the interactive, voice, data and video capability necessary for distance learning. It is imperative that these services be provided directly to the classroom, where the learning actually takes place. I urge the Commission to address the affordability needs of both the capital expenses of services and the ongoing costs.

Granite District provides services to nearly 75,000 students in urban and suburban areas. As the 28th largest school district in the nation, Granite services 62 elementary schools, 15 junior high schools, 9 high schools, and 3 special schools. Presently, our telecommunications technology consists of the following:

(a) Through our mainframe we are connected to all 89 schools, either directly or via modem. Student, financial, and electronic mail services are supported on the mainframe.

(b) We have connected, through T1 lines, many of our school to the Internet and are in the process of completing the T1 connections to all schools.

(c) We also have cable drops to nearly all schools in the district and many of the schools are using educational services on cable.

(d) Additionally, we use fax machines in all high schools and many of the junior high and elementary schools.

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(e) Many of our schools have additional modem connections which are used to access information from remote sites.

Our district is interested in acquiring new technology, specifically:

(a) Systems to communicate with parents integrating computer and telephone technology.

(b) Classes and other instructional support that could be accessed via Internet of other systems.

(c) Instructional live action video and more general multimedia that enhances teaching and learning.

(d) The integration of PC's to data that exist in multiple databases at multiple locations, client/server applications for students and staff.

(e) Develop "Intranet" applications allowing the end user to use a web browser and PC platform of choice to access intra-district information, such as training and district documents.

The affordability of technology usage presents several barriers to our district, such as:

(a) Technology money generally comes from legislative-designated funds through our State Office of Education and only amounts to a few thousand dollars per school.

(b) We generally don't have enough money for start-up costs.

(c) It is difficult to cover on-going line costs for technology.

(d) We are short on money for training staff members to use telecommunications appropriately.

(e) We can't afford enough computers and other technology devices to provide appropriate access in the learning environment.

(f) Staff to support and develop using the new technologies that are available.

Our district has benefitted from technology in the following areas:

(a) Greater availability of information in both quality and quantity for learning.

(b) Additional support for teaching the basic skills.

The Honorable Reed Hundt  
Page Three  
May 3, 1996

(c) Greater approximation of reality for learning through the use of live action video and other multimedia.

(d) An increase in the level of tool skill achievement by using contemporary word processing, desk top publishing, authoring, presentation, and spread-sheet programs.

(e) Greater technology skill for the workplace by specialized training in multimedia and applied technology classes.

Technology in the classroom is critical to ensuring that our children can succeed in a high-tech world marketplace. I urge the Commission to adopt rules that will help bring the broadest range of educational technology to our schoolchildren.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Judith A. Larson".

Judith A. Larson, Member  
Granite Board of Education

so

## Board of County Commissioners

Ken L. Foster, Chairman  
Burt Aaronson, Vice-Chairman  
Karen T. Marcus  
Carol A. Roberts  
Warren H. Newell  
Mary McCarty  
Maude Ford Lee

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County Administrator  
Robert Weisman

County Library System



November 7, 1996

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW Room 814  
Washington, DC 20554

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NOV 12 1996

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Dear Mr. Hundt:

I am writing about the Universal Service aspects of rule making for the new telecommunications law. I urge your strong support for discounted service for libraries and schools and to endorse the Comments filed by the American Library Association. Palm Beach County Library needs access to affordable telecommunications bandwidth. The lack of this access is hampering needed services. We need access to the Internet and to emerging electronic information resources. To provide that access libraries need telecommunication service at discounted rates.

Today to provide access to electronic information, Palm Beach County Libraries are paying more than \$140,000 annually for telecommunications service. As the library tries to provide universal access to the world wide web and other bandwidth intensive information services in this large geographic area, we see telecommunication costs as an increasing deterrent to quality service.

I endorse the American Library Association's rate recommendation of TSLRIC or the best commercial rate. Please avoid complex bureaucratic solutions and let libraries go into the market place and purchase discounted service. A simple discount mechanism will be technology neutral, promote competition, and help ensure information access to all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jerry W. Brownlee, Director

cc: Members of Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service

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PALM BEACH COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

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**ON UNIVERSAL SERVICE**

**The Honorable Reed E. Hundt, Chairman -**

**Federal Communications Commission**

**1919 M Street, NW, Suite 814**

**Washington, DC 20554**

**Telephone: 202-418-1000; Facsimile: 202-418-2801**

**The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner**

**Federal Communications Commission**

**1919 M Street, NW, Suite 844**

**Washington, DC 20554**

**Telephone: 202-418-2200; Facsimile: 202-418-2820**

**The Honorable Susan Noss, Commissioner -**

**Federal Communications Commission**

**1919 M Street, NW, Suite 832**

**Washington, DC 20554**

**Telephone: 202-418-2100; Facsimile: 202-418-2821**

**The Honorable Julia Johnson, Commissioner**

**Florida Public Service Commission**

**Capital Circle Office Center**

**2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard**

**Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850**

**Telephone: 904-413-6044; Facsimile: 904-413-6395**

**The Honorable Kenneth McClure, Vice Chairman -**

**Missouri Public Service Commission**

**301 W. High Street, Suite 530**

**Jefferson City, MO 65101**

**Telephone: 573-751-4221; Facsimile: 573-751-1847**

**The Honorable Sharon L. Nelson, Chairman**

**Washington Utilities & Transportation**

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MINDWORKS MEDIA, INC.

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

10.24.96

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Dear Chairman Hundt and Commissioners Ness and Chong,

I am attaching the editorial I submitted to the NYTimes, Washington Post, and Wall Street Journal . As an educator, interactive media expert and advocate, parent and concerned citizen I ask you to consider the enormous benefits to our society that can be brought about if you vote to pass the resolution to bring about an "E-rate" with provisions to provide permanent, deep discounts on services, make services available to all schools and libraries, and make all telecommunications services truly affordable for all communities of learners.

Sincerely,

*CARLA SEAL-WANNER*  
Carla Seal-Wanner, Ed.D.

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Submitted by: Dr. Carla Seal-Wanner, formerly Director of the Graduate Program in Instructional Technology and Media, Columbia University, interactive media advocate, consultant and developer, mother of a five-year-old daughter well on her way to digeratidum.

#### CONFRONTING THE TECHNOLOGY GAP IN THE BRIDGE TO THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

As we walk across the infamous bridge to the 21st Century one of the most significant factors contributing to the vast divide between educationally advantaged and disadvantaged students in our nation will be limited access to computers and valuable computer learning tools in school and at home. This month America has the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to working on the problem of universal access to information technologies for all children and life-long learners. Pending FCC legislation can ensure that advanced telecommunications services are available to all learners who will be out there on the educational playing fields of the next millennium.

Without the opportunities to obtain the skills to become literate, discerning and skilled consumers of the new interactive media the vast majority of our young citizens will not even be invited to the tryouts. The young digeratid of the future will only be those who can afford their own computer, or are fortunate enough to attend one of the nine percent of our public schools, four percent of private schools or live near one of the libraries (28 percent) wired to the empowering informational and educational resources of the Internet. If the estimated 60 percent of new jobs created by the year 2000 will require computer skills who will be prepared for those jobs?

On November 8, the Federal Communication Commission will receive a recommendation that can determine the extent to which libraries and schools nationwide have access to affordable and locally chosen telecommunications services. The passage of the Telecommunications Act earlier this year mandates the development of a rate for educational institutions; or an "E-rate" to secure affordable rates reflecting the financial capability of a community. As the FCC and the Federal-State Joint Board consider implementing the universal service provision of the Telecommunications Act citizens must demand that they pass the resolution to bring about an "E-rate" with provisions to provide permanent, deep discounts on services, make services available to all schools and libraries, and make all telecommunications services truly affordable for all communities of learners.

The Clinton Administration and the FCC have worked hard to improve the quality of the media in our children's lives. They supported the recent "V-chip" legislation with the requirement that industry rate programs with violent content so that parents will have the



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option to block these shows from their home. This summer the FCC ratified the ruling of the Children's Television Act of 1990 to require licensees to provide three hours per week of quality educational programming for children. Now as a nation, we must recognize not only the problem of the lack of quality media in all our children's lives, but the fact that those media of the highest quality and educational value are most likely to be available to more affluent children.

Children from economically disadvantaged households are more likely to have as their regular "screen" diet: older TV sets which will not have the "V-chip", less disposable income to pay for educational videotape rentals or purchases and cable access -- where alternative programs and educational services for children are likely to appear soon, and limited or no access to computer learning tools. There is already some evidence that the children who do have access to computers use them more than they watch TV, with much of their "screen" time devoted to activities they characterize as "for learning."

Electronic and information deprivation follows hard on the heels of economic deprivation, raising the specter that poor children may never have a fair chance to participate as full citizens. The pending FCC regulation can begin to attack this problem through positive steps to implement universal access to educational opportunities that can help prepare all of America's young cybercadets for the creative, intellectual, civic and work-place challenges of the next millennium.

Individual citizens, educators, and industry leaders should all participate in this historic opportunity to bring the world of information to every school child and life-long learner in America. In particular, hardware and software industry leaders should act now to have an impact on this decision. The incentive for them is clear: these are the users, consumers, and creators of your products for the future!

Write to the FCC today and do your part to see that a discounted rate -- the "E-rate" -- becomes part of the pending regulation (FCC @ 1919 M Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20554).

October 23, 1996, New York, N.Y.